



PHOTO BY JIM ROBERTSON



Madisonville Police Officer  
**Justin Jones**

KELLY FOREMAN | PROGRAM COORDINATOR

**A**s far as Madisonville Police Officer Justin Jones is concerned, there is truth to the theory that some people are born for law enforcement. From a very young age, Jones knew policing was something he wanted to pursue. Jones graduated from Kentucky Wesleyan College with a bachelor’s in criminal justice in just three years. In college, Jones worked with the Kentucky State Police at Trooper Island, getting his first glimpse of police work before joining the Madisonville Police Department in 2012.

**When I was little I would carry handcuffs in my diaper.** From the time I was a little boy I was just fascinated with police. I would sing the theme song from “Cops” when I was a kid. It’s kind of a dream come true, really. There’s nothing else I can see myself doing.

**I love policing.** I love every minute of it. I’d do it for free if they asked me to. My goal is to try to make the community better, but my passion is getting dope off the streets. DUIs and drug related cases are what I focus on when I’m not answering calls and working wrecks.

**It’s home.** I grew up in Hopkins County, so I wanted to make a difference in my home community.

**Growing up in Hopkins County,** I thought I was going to be so bored in Madisonville because there was nothing going on here. Last year alone I locked up more than 400 people. The crime is out there, you just have to look for it. It kind of blew my mind how much drugs are on the street. We don’t have as big a problem as some larger cities in neighboring communities, but unfortunately, there is still plenty out there for us to do.

**I went through the Advanced Roadside Impaired Driving** training and scored really well in the class. The instructors said, ‘If you’re interested in Drug Recognition Expert training, let us know.’ The chief thought I’d be good for it, so I applied and luckily got in and did well in the class. There’s a two-day pre-school, and after you pass that, you go to a seven-day school in Richmond. Then, if you pass, you go to Los Angeles for seven days as well.

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**It was different. It’s definitely not Kentucky.** The type of people and the drugs we came in contact with in LA were interesting. In Madisonville, we don’t have a heroin problem as of now. We’re not seeing it. We have a lot of methamphetamine, a lot of synthetic cannabinoids and pills. In LA, it was a good experience to be able to see the heroin, because we know eventually it’s probably going to be here.

**We went to LAPD central booking** and they brought in people who were arrested for public intoxication, possession or DUI. Everybody in California has to have a drug evaluation done if they’re charged with public intoxication or something like that. In Kentucky, it’s at our discretion whether we do that or not. We did the evaluations on people they arrested and reported if we thought they were under the influence of a narcotic, a stimulant or whatever it might be, and the officers put that in their arrest report.

**Yesterday was my first shift after coming back** from LA and I arrested two DUIs on day shift. When you think about DUIs, most people think of alcohol and that they’re always at nighttime. Most of my DUI arrests are drug related and they’re on day shift. People think just because you’re prescribed Lortabs or Vicodin that they can drive. That’s not the case.

**DRE, if anything, will teach you to** look at people’s eyes. If we’re in a dark setting and your pupils are real constricted, there’s a good chance you’re under the influence of a narcotic. If we’re in the sunlight and your pupils are really dilated, you’re probably under the influence of a stimulant or hallucinogen or even marijuana. There’s a lot to the class and looking at eyes is just a small part of it. We look at blood pressure, pulse rate, muscle tone — all kinds of things. Even when I’m off duty, I’ll go to a restaurant with my girlfriend and she’ll say, ‘Quit looking at people!’ I say, ‘I can’t help it, they’re on meth or I think they smoke crack,’ or whatever it might be. Looking at people’s eyes is instilled in me now.

**I feel like almost all crime revolves around drugs.** Whether it’s theft, murders — all the way to kids being abused — it can revolve around drugs. So the best way I feel like I can help my community is by getting drugs off the street. It’s also challenging. Anybody who works in law enforcement knows DUIs don’t usually fall in your lap. Most of the time you have to look for it, for certain indicators, in the way they act and talk. It’s kind of a game really. Like hide and seek — they try to hide the dope and I try to find it. It’s always something new and challenging to do.

**I like night shift — I like the excitement.** But I get a lot more dope and DUIs on day shift. I can see the people in the car better. Say there’s six or seven scented trees hanging off the mirror. Why does the car smell that bad? Maybe they have a lot of marijuana in there. That’s just one indicator. But you can see that a lot better on days than you can on nights.

**We are always reaching out to the community.** Chief (Wade) Williams feels strongly about community policing. We get out and focus on hot spots throughout the community. If we’re having a lot of thefts on one street and a lot of vandalisms, we’ll get out and talk to the community people. They don’t want their stuff stolen either, so they’re going to be more aware and talk to us. It’s almost like they start policing their own community.

**I love working with kids.** I’m kind of a kid myself — I’m only 23. If I see kids out playing basketball on the street, I get out there and call out that I’m on a community contact. I’ll play ball with the kids. By the end of it, I’m sweating and beat to death. But I enjoy doing anything involving kids to try to give them a better image of police officers. To help them know we’re not all bad and we’re not going to take them to jail. Just because we arrest mommy or daddy doesn’t mean we’re bad people. 🐶

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